FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED IN

CHRIST CHURCH, SOREL,

ON THE DEATH OF THE LATE LAMENTED

MRS. ROSS CUTHBERT,

ON

SUNDAY, THE 5TH MAY, 1850,

BY HER SINCERE AND SORROWING FRIEND AND PASTOR,

THE REV. W. ANDERSON, RECTOR.

Printed by Request, and for Private Distribution.

SOREL, 1850.

PRINTED BY JAMES POTTS, HERALD OFFICE, MONTREAL.

FC 401
C8
A5

FUNERAL SERMON.

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."—LUKE II. 29, 30.

Every spiritually-enlightened and serious reader of his Bible must be struck with the perfect composure, the calm, unruffled tranquillity, with which God's ancient servants are recorded to have met, and to have triumphed over, *Death*, the great king of terrors. *They* seem to have thought no more of the act of dying than other men do of the ordinary and the every day occurrence of taking a journey, or of composing themselves to rest in sleep. Thus, of the Patriarchs, we read, that when *their* last hour came, they "gathered up their feet into their bed," collected their households around them, gave them their parting injunctions, or prophetic instructions, with their dying blessing, and then, without a recorded feeling of regret or of alarm, surrendered up their souls into the hands of God who gave them. There is, in truth, something singularly striking in the Scripture narrative of the dying hour of some of these ancient worthies. To *Aaron*, it was said, "Go up to Mount *Hor*," and to his brother *Moses*, "Go up to Mount *Nebo*, and die." Now, we know that to depart out of life is, in all cases, a most solemn thing, and one from which man instinctively recoils. * Even in the best of men, nature, when gathering itself up for the final act of dissolution, seems to need all

* Melville.

the prayers and the kindnesses of friends, that it may be enabled to meet the last enemy with composure. The chamber in which a good man dies, is ordinarily occupied by affectionate relatives. They stand round his bed to watch his every look, and to catch his every word. They whisper to him encouraging truths, and they speak cheeringly of the better land to which he is hastening; though they may often be compelled to turn away the face, lest he should be grieved by the tears which their own loss extorts. But it is remarkable, that all of gloom and terror, overhanging dissolution, seems to have been taken away in the departure hence of the Patriarchs and holy men of old. *They* speak of dying just as they would have spoken of taking rest in sleep—as though there could be nothing formidable in the act of dissolution—nothing from which human nature might shrink. Or, they are told by God, to "*go up and die*"—the Lord speaking to them as familiarly, and with as little indication of requiring what was painful or difficult, as if He had bidden them to a banquet, or directed them to perform the most ordinary duty. But there is here much more than at first sight meets the eye. *Death* was every whit as mysterious and as solemn a thing *then*, as it is *now*. And those who died were all of them men of like passions and infirmities—of like feelings and frailties with ourselves. *Time*, has neither stripped the *former* of its terrors, nor the *latter* of his fears. Scripture itself, however, furnishes a clear and satisfactory solution of the enigma: and *that portion* of Scripture presented to you, in the words of our text, both embodies in *example*, and exhibits in *precept*, the solution of which we speak. They are the words (as

you will doubtless remember,) of a "man in Jerusalem, whose name was *Simeon*," of whom it was written that "he was a just man and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel," and to whom it was "revealed, by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." Being directed, by express revelation, to enter the temple at the moment when Mary was presenting Jesus before the Lord, he took the babe, we are told, into his arms, and blessed God, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The plain and obvious truths which these words convey, are simply *these*: that *Christ* is appointed of God as man's "salvation": and that "seeing Christ," (not so much with the *eye of sense*, for many, like Simeon, did *that*, who yet believed not in Him), but that "*seeing Christ*, with the *eye of faith*, disarms Death of its sting and the Grave of its terrors, and enables the believer to pass through that otherwise dark and dreaded valley "fearing no evil," but "departing in peace." And no laboured proof, no extended Scriptural citations, will be needed to substantiate these glorious and most blessed truths. They are stamped, in broad and legible characters, on every page of Scripture. They run parallel with the whole history of man—from his first apostacy to this hour. And in type, prophecy, or precept, they may be read in every book, and nearly in every chapter of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. *These* were the truths, wrapped up in that first memorable promise of "the Seed of the Woman bruising the Serpent's head," made to Adam and Eve, after their grievous fall, in paradise. And *these*, the same truths,

in which their righteous son, *Abel*, expressed his faith and hope, in that "*sacrifice*, more excellent than *Cain's*, by which, being dead, he yet speaketh." *These* were the truths, which Patriarchs and Prophets—which Apostles and Martyrs—which the Holy Church, throughout all the world, from *Abel* downwards to the Incarnation of the Saviour—did profess and acknowledge. *Time*, indeed, would utterly fail as to *particularize*—to speak even of the *illustrious*—in their successive generations, of men, like *Enoch* and *Noah*, and *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Moses*, and *David*, and a vast multitude more, who "saw not Death till they had first seen the Lord's Christ," and seeing *Him*, though not nigh, departed this life rejoicing. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but seeing them afar off, they were persuaded of them, and embraced them; and, looking confidently for their fulfilment through Jesus, they confessed themselves—they lived and they died as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, having here no continuing city—no abiding home—but looking, as the purchase of a Saviour's *death*, the free gift of a Saviour's unbounded love—for a *home* beyond the skies—for a better and an enduring world, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Thus, like Simeon, they waited for "the consolation of Israel." And when, to each in succession, the last of earth had arrived, and the summons came beckoning them away to that bourne whose sands are marked by no returning foot-prints, it found them *not* trembling and shrinking on the banks of the Jordan of Death—it found them *not* fearful to plunge, beneath its cold waves; but it found them confidently looking for *life* and *immortality* beyond its narrow, dividing stream—

waiting for their long expected deliverance; able, like *one*, to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another;" like a *second*, "*My flesh*, also, shall rest in hope; and when I awake, it shall be after thy likeness;" or, with a *third*, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my *dead body*, shall they arise;" or, like yet a *fourth*, staying himself upon the promise of his God, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. But go *thou* thy way, *Daniel*, till the end be, for *thou* shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, at the end of the days." They all, thus, "saw not *death*, till they had first seen," with the eye of faith, "the Lord's Christ;" and when the hour of their departure was at hand, they met it in the spirit of good old Simeon: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

And the same blessed experience—the same perfect triumph of *Grace* over *Nature*—of *Faith*, over human *frailty* and *fear*—of *Christ*, and trust *in Him*, over all the terrors of *Death*, and the *Grave*, and the *Judgment to come*, *has* been realized, and *is still* experienced every day by a multitude, in the aggregate, which no man can number. Under every phase and varied condition of this chequered life—under every conceivable disadvantage and the greatest discouragements to which poor, frail humanity could be exposed, has this triumph over *ourselves*, our *weakness* and our *fears*, and

over the combined power and malice of our worst enemies, been obtained. In the deepest poverty—in obscurity, friendlessness and desertion—under the exhaustion of protracted, or the sufferings of painful illness—amid the infirmities of advancing years, and the natural weakness and physical debility of frail and shrinking womanhood, is this sustaining, and marvellous power of the Gospel everywhere and daily witnessed. And like the existing and predicted preservation of the *Jews*, God's ancient people, it is a *standing miracle*, and to every thinking mind, will furnish powerful *internal* evidence of the truth and divine origin of Christianity. We know that love of *country*, of *honour*, or of *fame*, or that mere animal courage will incite men to deeds of noble daring—to seek the bubble *reputation* at the cannon's mouth—to brave death, amid all the storm and the strife of battle. But where all these, and every other conceivable *worldly* motive is wanting, and where, in their place, is substituted everything that can depress and dishearten, *poverty*, *desertion*, *pain*, and *sickness*, with no hope of *release* but in *death*, or of *rest* but in the *grave*; and yet, above all these, *men* and *women*, and *very children*, too, are seen to rise buoyant, and cheerful, and triumphant, and with the enduring fortitude of a *martyr*, and the unconquerable courage of a *hero*, to grapple with the last enemy, and to triumph over him, even in their fall! *What*, my brethren, but the Gospel of Christ, experimentally known, received, and loved—*what*, but the Almighty power of an invisible Saviour, making "*His* grace to be sufficient for us, and *His* strength to be perfected in our weakness," *can* or *will* do this? Oh, there is *a something* in the dying cham-

ber of a good man, which tells us of a truth that *God is there!*—which brings home to our hearts an irresistible conviction of the heaven-born truth, and blessedness, and vitality, of our holy religion! And what is *that something* but the presence (to the dying servant of God) of the Saviour himself? *What* is it but the heavenly peace which flows to the believer from union to Jesus, effected through living, saving faith, uniting us to *Him*, as the branch to the vine; and, *when effected*, realizing the Saviour, though unseen, continually to the view—making *His* merits, before God, our satisfying plea—*His* righteousness, our own—*His* all-sufficient grace and almighty strength, our very present help in our hour of utmost need. *This*, and *this alone*, will enable us to say, when our own last hour shall come, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who hath given to me the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." *This*, and *this alone*, will enable us to appropriate (as best descriptive of our own state and feelings) the words of Simeon to ourselves: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

And now, my brethren, the general tenor of these reflections, together with these surrounding badges of mourning and mementoes of respect for departed worth, will, doubtless, have led you to anticipate, in some degree, the remarks with which we close. And our reflections this day, have been, indeed, elicited; and these emblems of mourning and tokens of respect *are* exhibited for *one*, who well merits the *latter*, and who has exemplified the *former* through a long and

tried, and faithful *life*, no less than in a tranquil, peaceful, happy *death*. Truly, brethren, in the venerated lady of whom we speak "A Mother in Israel, has fallen!" Though living, now, for many years comparatively secluded from the world, yet, in that world, was she widely known, but only known as widely to be respected, as widely to be loved, and now, alas! as widely to be *mourned!* It is not as the daughter of the pious and celebrated *Rush*, the contemporary and friend of *Washington* and *Franklin*, and others, of world-wide fame—it is not as the sister of a living and eminent Statesman, and recent Ambassador from the mightiest Republic to the mightiest Monarchies of earth—it is not as allied by birth and consanguinity, to some of the first families of the neighbouring States—it is not as the friend of *Brock*, deeply regarded by that gallant hero in life, and specially mentioned in his posthumous memoirs—it is not as known, respected, and beloved largely in the neighbouring Republic, and in our own Province, both far and near—it is not in any, or in all of these particulars, that the regard for this departed lady, and now, that her best eulogium, is to be sought or found. These all, indeed, are *facts*, and *facts* upon which many would, exclusively, have prided themselves. But in HER case, they served but to elicit a beautiful trait in her character; and one of the many traits, assimilating her to the moral likeness of her Redeemer—viz: her deep *humility*—her perfect absence of all *pride* and of *vain-glory*—for the particulars we have mentioned, scarcely ever *named*, were certainly never *dwelt upon* with any degree of complacency and exultation. *No*, my brethren, *these* were not the circum-

stances which invested her with interest, and which have lastingly earned for her *a good report.* It was the intrinsic worth of her own sterling character—it was her long life of unswerving integrity—it was her unvarying, and perfect uprightness of conduct—it was her high-toned principles, implanted from on high, and developing themselves in the daily exhibition of all Christian virtues and graces—in meekness, and gentleness, and courtesy, which knew no respect of persons—in largeness of heart, and liberality of hand, bounded only by her means—in unmurmuring resignation to the will of her heavenly Father, through long years of accumulated and of sorest trials—in the most simple and implicit reliance upon God, her Saviour—in the constant and faithful discharge of every domestic, social, and relative duty—shedding sunshine upon her deeply-stricken household, and blessings on all around, even when advancing years, and heavy trials, had bowed her attenuated frame, almost to the dust.

These, my brethren, *these* are the things which have raised for her a monument in the world more durable than brass, better far than storied urn, or animated bust. "When the ear heard her, then it blessed her; and, when the eye saw her, it gave witness to her because she delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon her, and she caused the widow's heart to sing for joy; she was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a mother to the poor." This beautiful picture from Job, of the righteous man's life, is literally descriptive of the deeds *of her* whom now we mourn.

From the innermost circle of her nearest of kin, to the outer one of friends and acquaintance, or to the yet more extended one of her dependants and tenantry, sure I am that never has one heart ached, never has one eye been bedewed with tears for *word* or *deed* spoken or done by her. And her *end* was worthy of her *life*, it was, emphatically, *peace!* She had drunk deeply of the cup of sorrow of which her Saviour drank, and had been baptised with His baptism of suffering. She had both *actively done*, and *passively suffered*, the will of God, till her Lord ordered for her no more either to do or to endure; and till, like a shock of corn fully ripe, she was gathered into the heavenly garner. As the sojourner of a night, she met her end *at an Inn;* and, like the sojourner wearied with his journey, she rejoiced to arrive at home. Not a doubt, not a fear, ruffled her peace, as she stood upon the banks of the Jordan of death. Even the attendant minister of God, familiarised with such scenes, was yet astonished at her perfect peace, her tranquil assurance, her calm, undoubting reliance, upon her Redeemer. *That Redeemer's* dying love once more she desired to commemorate, and *did* so; and then, in the comfort of a reasonable religious and holy hope, in communion with the Church, and in peace with all mankind, bravely she entered, and triumphantly she passed, through death's dividing stream, followed only by the sighs and the tears of others, till lost to view, she entered (as we confidently hope) *Immanuel's* land, passing, once for ever, into the *rest* that remaineth for the people of God. That warm, kind heart, beats now, indeed, no longer! That rare mind, never dimmed through long years of trouble, is, for a season, obscured in death!

But blessed be God, whilst with those that weep, we mingle our sympathies and heartfelt expressions of sorrow, we yet rejoice, in the midst of all, for the blessed and consoling assurance which both this *life* and this *death* afford. They seal to us anew the assurance of a Saviour's undying faithfulness and love. We recognize both in the beneficent and useful life, "the patience in tribulation," and the victory in death, which have signalized the case of her of whom we have spoken. Possessed, like every child of fallen Adam, of a depraved and guilty nature, it was the *Grace of God* alone which made her, in any respect, to differ—which supported her in trial, and which comforted her in death. And *that grace*, my brethren, free as the air you breathe, and boundless as eternity, is treasured up in Jesus, and is now most freely offered you. Oh, may you learn to seek it at a Saviour's hands! May you make *that Saviour*, your friend—your abiding stay and trust. For, in this life of many changes, where all around *is now*, or *soon will be*, dark and drear—*only in Him*, (be ye well assured) only in a Saviour, *truly known*, *sincerely loved*, and *faithfully served*, will you find *rest* to your souls—with quietness, stability, and assurance for ever. And when *Temporal life* is ebbing away, and *Eternal life* is close at hand, *only* in Jesus will you be able, with Simeon, to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."